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NEWS





MECHANICAL MUSIC

Wednesday 11 November 1992



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HILLANDALE NEWS



The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded 1919

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EDITOR'S DESK

An unusual scheme

Recently details of a novel service, which may be of interest to readers, landed through my letterbox. This is called the Thesaurus Auction Search Service. Thesaurus receives the auction catalogues of some 420 or so auction houses in the U.K., Ireland and Channel Islands. Details from these are entered into their computer and their subscribers are then notified of those items, which they are interested in, that are coming up for auction.



For example, a subscription to the Thesaurus service covering gramophones and phonographs in January 1992 produced a list of 76 lots included in 48 auctions at that time. The system also collates sale prices which — according to Thesaurus — are valuable in establishing trends. From examining the sample computer print-outs sent to me it would seem that most areas of the country are covered.

The cost of this service appears to be rather expensive for the average collector as the introductory offer costs £195 (including VAT) per annum for a U.K. resident with a fax machine. How many of our members own one of these devices, I wonder? The postal subscription costs an extra £60. With £255 being the total cost of the initial offer I dread to learn what the normal cost of the Thesaurus service will be!

Thesaurus would appear to be a double-edged sword as far as our machine-owning members are concerned. If it became popular the chances of picking up additions to our collections at bargain prices could be severely diminished. On the other hand those of us who may wish to dispose of any of our cherished artefacts will obviously want to raise as high a price as possible for them and Thesaurus may help us to find the auction houses who are attracting the highest bids. Personally speaking, I wish this scheme would die a sudden death as it would remove a lot of the fun and the thrills of the chase and the find from our hobby.

Anybody interested in further details of this service should contact Andrew Hilton at Thesaurus, [REDACTED] London W1 4DQ, tel: [REDACTED]

Changes

George Glastris has asked me to inform readers that he has changed jobs and now works for Sotheby's. He can be contacted on tel: [REDACTED] (business calls only).

Please note that material intended for inclusion in Hillendale News must reach the Editor not later than **six weeks before the first day of the month of issue**.

Hence the deadline for the October issue will be **15th August 1992**.

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Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor.

HOW I STARTED COLLECTING

by Dr. Peter Czada

My father Eduard Czada was born in 1885. He ran a shop which sold sheet music, musical instruments and gramophones. The shop was situated at 28, Markplatz in Cottbus. The photograph on this page shows this shop. My father used the original photograph as a post card. This was post-marked 11th November 1912. Unfortunately this building was destroyed in the last days of the Second World War. In the 1920s my father moved to Spremberger Strasse in Cottbus.

Like many businesses in the Depression between the wars my father's shop folded and he moved to Berlin. In 1933 he married my mother and died in 1937 one year after I was born. In the years immediately after the war when we were without electricity or radio I played old 78 records on a table gramophone. I found some records amongst my late father's belongings — about 30 in all and these were what I listened to.

Amongst my favourite records were those by the Comedy Harmonists and I was pleased to re-discover these records again in the 1960s amongst our household junk. Unfortunately one of them Electrola EH 432 had broken and I advertised in the local press for a replacement. This was the start of my collecting old records and talking machines which led to me making many friends and connections in our hobby and to my joining the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society.



Eduard Czada outside his shop in Cottbus

ROMEO AND ... DUPLICATE?

A Shakespearean tragedy of mistaken identity

by Peter Adamson

Never was a tale of greater woe, than Prokofiev's music to Romeo

The prima ballerina Galina Ulanova was not entirely joking when she proposed this humorous toast at the first Russian performance of Prokofiev's ballet "Romeo and Juliet" opus 64 at the Kirov Theatre, Leningrad on 11 January 1940. After all, the music had originally been commissioned and had then been completed in 1935 without a Russian stage performance because of broken contracts, first with the Kirov, then with the Bolshoi Theatre. Worse still, the first performance (in December 1938) had taken place outside Russia, in Brno, Czechoslovakia.

The music had been declared "undanceable", parts of it had been "too quiet" for the dancers to hear, and an alternative happy ending had even been proposed! In the face of this, Prokofiev quite reasonably produced two suites from the score (opp 64-bis and 64-ter), in order to give the music a hearing: these were first performed respectively in Moscow (November 1936) and in Leningrad (April 1937, under the composer) – and at least the music itself was well received. Suite no 2 was broadcast by the BBC Symphony Orchestra in a Prokofiev concert in January 1938 (unfortunately not recorded); Bernard Shore, then principal viola player of the orchestra, gives a vivid glimpse of Prokofiev's conducting and rehearsal style in his book "The Orchestra Speaks" (1938). We can get some impression of the results, from what may be his only recording as conductor; but even this has been haunted by some sort of jinx, and its provenance is not at all clear.

The records

In 1943, Decca issued a set of 10" yellow ("gold") label discs of Prokofiev conducting the Moscow State Philharmonic Orchestra in a performance of the Suite no 2. These were numbered Z1 to Z6 (the Z prefix corresponding to the 12" X-prefixed series). As the "Gramophone" reviewer pointed out (June 1943), record Z2 was mysteriously absent from the set: this was assumed to contain the music for the second movement from the suite ("Juliet, the little girl"). Just to confuse the issue, the review referred to the records as being 12", and Z3 became Z2 part way through! The Decca discs were obviously repressed from stampers used in Russia for the set USSR 7754-7765 (twelve side numbers in their cataloguing system). The second disc in the Russian set does indeed contain the missing music.

Although Z2 was apparently never issued in the UK, there was a reissue of the set on a Turnabout LP. (TV4160) which included (without comment!) the **first side only** of the missing disc. This issue was reviewed in "Gramophone" of April 1971, with some reference to the only partly restored second movement. Perhaps the stamper for the second side was damaged in war-time transit from the USSR to London, although I have been unable to confirm this.

Having had two not-quite-satisfactory issues of Prokofiev's performance, it would seem reasonable to assume that sooner or later the whole recording would eventually appear. And in 1988 Philips announced a new

series of Legendary Classics; these were historical recordings revamped for CD by a complicated computer filtering process (similar to CEDAR) marketed by Sonic Solutions under the hopeful logo NoNoise. Mostly these were to be performances from the 1950s, but just to show what the possibilities might be, we were treated to a CD (420 778-2PLC, now deleted) containing, among other things, Ravel conducting his "Bolero" and Prokofiev conducting the Suite number 2 from "Romeo and Juliet".

In the Gramophone of August 1988, the reviewer stated that he had "made a careful comparison" between the new CD, the Turnabout LP and the Decca 78s. He considered that the CD reissue represented "Prokofiev's only recording as a conductor" and that the 78rpm version now "appeared complete in the UK for the first time".

Unfortunately he was wrong.

Although there were several points of similarity, it was obvious that the CD recording was not the same as on the 78s. Just to be sure, I made up a rather horrible demonstration tape, with the CD version in the left channel and the 78s simultaneously in the right. This made it quite clear that the two recordings did not match: not only were there differences in timing and tempo, but in some places, startling amounts of percussion were audible only in the CD version – conversely some similar instrumentation was more audible in the 78 version than on the CD. The reviewer's explanation of this apparent miracle was that "the new transfer [had] certainly dug deep to find an impressive degree of sheer impact and presence".

When I wrote to the Gramophone, the editor showed enough interest as to pass on my comments and tape to the reviewer, and to write to Philips on my behalf. The reviewer's reply was deeply disturbing:

"I am quite sure that the ... performance ... is the same as on the 78s... [It] has certain

characteristics in the playing – poor intonation at certain points, shaky ensemble at times, and a very individual, direct kind of conducting by the composer – which are unmistakable and common to all three formats..."

So far as the differences of tempo revealed by your tape are concerned, you will be aware that it is now possible to change the tempo of a recording without changing its pitch, and it would seem that some technique of this kind has been used in the new transfer."

The potential implications of using such a technique would of course be scandalous! And why should it even be considered? Why did the reviewer so obstinately reject my evidence? No one else who heard my demonstration was in any doubt that the two recordings were indeed different.

So now I had a problem: how was I to demonstrate that the differences were real, and more importantly, to find out the true origin of the CD reissue? Philips expressed themselves unable to help me any further; the recording they released was "what is described on the packaging", and they later suggested that it was in fact from the 78s USSR 7754-7765. I had to leave the matter at that, without any public exposure of the problem, and with the strange thought: was it a conspiracy or ... the other?

In April 1991, the "Gramophone" carried a centenary assessment of recordings of Prokofiev's music, written by Christopher Palmer: he started of course by listing the rather few recordings made by the composer – solo pieces and the Piano Concerto no 3 (with the LSO under Coppola) on 78s, some piano rolls, and "now reissued by Philips on CD" the Second suite from "Romeo and Juliet". "Some listeners have found this a disappointment" he said, causing me to rush back into the fray to warn those listeners of what might be more than just a disappointment, but an actual fraud.

The differences

I now really had to pin down the differences between the CD and the 78s. And I had to confine myself principally to those aspects which could be **measured**: timing, tempo, and melodic or harmonic differences (if any). Because the sound on the CD is rather disgustingly distorted, it would be hard to state anything categorical about the instrumental balance, for instance. It is impractical to list here all the observable differences in detail, but it is worth giving some examples, with musical illustrations.

A noticeable **instrumental difference** occurs in the gentle central passage of the first movement ("Montagues and Capulets") [example 1]; the CD has loud tambourines which are barely in evidence on the 78s. Unexpectedly similar in both versions is the ponderous rendering of the main outer sections, well below the 100 beats/minute indicated in the score. Examples of **timing and tempo differences** can be found in no 3 ("Friar Laurence") (78: 2m27s, CD: 2m18s) and no 5 ("Romeo and Juliet before parting") (78: 8m50s, CD: 8m30s) which both show the 78 version to be noticeably slower. No 4 ("Dance") is faster on 78s (2m18s) than on CD (2m21s), and no 7 ("Romeo at Juliet's Grave") is sometimes **much faster**: the main tempo differences are shown in [ex 2] – at figure 66, where the 78 version is nearly 40% faster!

A very audible example of a **technical slip** occurs in no 5 where the oboist runs out of breath on the CD, causing a change of rhythm [ex 3]. In no 7 there is a decided split on the trombones on the 78s [ex 4].

But the most spectacular differences, and ones which utterly refute the Gramophone reviewer's "careful comparison", are the following. Two bars before the end of no 6 ("Dance of the Antilles girls"), there is a chord of D minor (on D), which is faithfully performed on the 78rpm version; but the CD apparently has instead A minor with A

in the bass, which rather defeats the harmonic progression leading to the final cadence [ex 5] – here the final bassoon melody sounds on the CD more like a cor anglais. Even better, towards the end of no 7, the CD has two bars of music which are entirely **missing** from the version on 78s. [ex 6]. Each of the two performances thus has a notable and unexplained difference from the published score – should this be taken to indicate the authority of the composer conducting in each case?

What was the origin of the CD?

There remained the question of the origin of the CD version of the performance: my naturally suspicious mind led me to wonder if Philips had acquired (perhaps inadvertently) a tape from another conductor's performance from the early days. After all, WERM gives examples of Russian recordings which were reissued in the USA attributed to alternative conductors, and Christopher Palmer's survey mentions a probably spurious attribution to Prokofiev.

My luck was in when I advertised in "Hillendale News" and received a lightning response from Philip Moores who came up with a 1983 Melodiya LP (M10 44949 005). According to the sleeve, this is a recording of Prokofiev directing the Moscow Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, from a "1938 archive recording from All-Soviet Radio". But what is significant is that this recording is **identical** to the Philips CD – in fact so close a copy that it is possible to play the two continuously from track to track while maintaining perfect synchronisation.

By another stroke of luck, I was later put in contact with the man who had helped to organise the Philips Legendary Classics series, Tadaatsu Atarashi (now of Nippon Columbia); he was able to confirm that Philips had used a tape supplied by arrangement with Melodiya. This absolved both Sonic Solutions and Philips from error in the matter. So what was the origin of the

Ex 1 1. Montagues and Capulets

7 *moderato tranquillo*

p flute (+ violas gliss.)

Ex 4 7. Romeo at Juliet's grave

60 *adagio funebre*

f trombones

[split on 78]

Ex 2 7. Romeo at Juliet's grave

figure:	57	61	62	63	65	66	67	[end]	playing time
beats / minute:	78:	65	80	86	92	91	92	64	110
CD:	66	74	67	69	94 - 63 - 66	53 - 67 - 82			5m50s 6m29s

Ex 3 5. Romeo and Juliet before parting

50 *andante*

mf oboe

78

CD

Ex 5 6. Dance of the Antilles girls

56 +6 wind

andante con eleganza

bassoon solo [?cor anglais on CD]

p oboe/sax

double bass

↑ [A bass + ?A minor on CD]

strings

Ex 6 7. Romeo at Juliet's grave

67 -6 *poco più mosso*

CD only

ff

mf

+8va

pp strings

brass

Prokofiev: Ballet *Romeo and Juliet* Suite no 2 op 64-ter
Extracts reproduced by kind permission of Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers Ltd

tape? At this point the trail unfortunately fizzles out, although not without some fine spluttering. A line of enquiry to Moscow which I had already started led eventually to the Archives of Sound Recordings, from where Vice-Director Vladimir Koliada sent me an engaging (if rather confusing) reply:

"Archives of Sound Recordings have ... metal stampers recordings of ... Suite no 2 ... Numbers of this stampers are from 7754 to 7765. Its original was a film-sound track a 1938 recording. In our country this recordings had been issued in 1938, disc 78. This metal stampers were used in 1983 for disc 33 1/3 M10 449 49005."

In other words, the Moscow Archives claim to have metal stampers for the USSR 78rpm set, and that these were from a 1938 film sound-track and were used for the Melodiya LP! It is certain that the original 78rpm recording (as issued on USSR and Decca) was not used for the LP. But what about the film idea?

Sonic considerations

As I have indicated, I have not yet been able to establish the true origin of the Philips CD and the Melodiya tape. But there are some opinions which may fairly be held, based on the actual sound of the recording. Here I shall refer to the USSR/Decca 78rpm version as "version A" and the Melodiya/Philips recording as "version B".

It would seem fair to say that Russian film sound-tracks from before the war were notably poor in sound quality. Examples of war-time Russian film-recordings were issued in the UK by Decca, for instance the Khachaturian Violin Concerto on K1082-K1086. Considering the typical sound of such issues, it seems impossible that either recording of "Romeo and Juliet" could be from such a pre-war or war-time source. Nevertheless version B has some qualities which might be attributable to a film sound-track, such as pitch wobbles and

the peculiar background noise: there was a film made of the whole ballet, performed by the Bolshoi and starring Ulanova, but this was in 1954, after Prokofiev had died. As the film sound-track was issued on LP (eg Colosseum CRLP 10209/10) which may be the origin, although a "Suite no 2" would then have to have been "made up" from items scattered around the complete score. Certainly, version B has a frequency response far more like recordings of the late 1940s or early 1950s rather than late 1930s Russia. Unfortunately, the true quality of the original recording used for version B is obscured by excessive distortion on both LP and CD, possibly a side-effect of processing used for the Melodiya issue. Alternatively, the distortion could conceivably arise from an early (and badly set-up) tape recording, although the film sound-track idea seems to have the slight edge.

Summary of conclusions

- o There are two different recordings of the Suite no 2 from "Romeo and Juliet", each claimed to be conducted by Prokofiev: version A issued on 78s (USSR, Decca etc) and LP (Turnabout); version B on LP (Melodiya) and CD (Philips)
- o The performances are generally similar enough to have the same conductor
- o Each performance has a different notable discrepancy from the score (which may or may not indicate the composer's authority)
- o 78rpm version A sounds to be probably pre-war and certainly not from a film
- o CD version B is probably post-war and possibly from a film sound-track or early magnetic tape

So, do we have another, previously unknown, recording of Prokofiev as conductor? Or have Melodiya and Philips reissued some other, similar, performance by an-

two different recordings issued on USSR 78rpm records numbers 7754–7765? One difficulty is that – as usual – the biographies are almost silent on the topic of recordings. Do we actually have any recording of Prokofiev as conductor? Unless Melodiya and the Archives of Sound Recording in Moscow can sort things out at their end, we may never know the whole truth.

Acknowledgments etc

I must record the help given to me by various people. Thanks are in order for the patient help given by Mavis Hammond-Brake (National Sound Archive), Philip Moores (who came up trumps with the Melodiya LP), the Reid Music Library (Edinburgh), the Library of Congress (Washington, DC), the BBC record library, Tadaatsu Atarashi (Nippon Columbia), Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga (MK), Peter Copeland and

other conductor? Could there have been Roger Wilmut (for advice on the "sound quality"), Bill Shaman (for general practical advice and confirmation of differences) and Messrs Boosey and Hawkes (for permission to reproduce the musical examples).

Good marks (for effort) go to the Archives of Sound Recordings in Moscow, Supraphon in Prague, and Philips Classic Productions in Baarn, who all tried hard to help (in a language not their own) and came up with some inexplicable duds; and also to two successive "Gramophone" editors who, despite some sympathy and help, baulked at publication of the controversy.

No prizes go to Melodiya, Decca and various uninterested Prokofiev experts, who all declined to answer my queries. Finally, a special wooden spoon should be awarded to the 1988 "Gramophone" reviewer.

References and further reading

- Prokofiev: *Romeo and Juliet Suite no 2*, op 64-ter (Kalmus min. orch. scores no 113, Boosey and Hawkes)
 Schwarz, Boris: *Music and musical life in Soviet Russia 1917–1970* (Barrie and Jenkins, London 1972) p153 [for Ulanova quote]
 Shore, Bernard: *The Orchestra Speaks* (Longman, London 1938) pp130–132
 Palmer, Christopher: *Sergey Prokofiev – a centenary survey* (Gramophone April 1991, pp181–1819)
 Clough, Francis + Cuming, G J: *The World's Encyclopaedia of Recorded Music ["WERM"]* (3 vols, Sidgwick and Jackson, London 1952, 1953, 1957)

- Gramophone reviews:** Decca 78s Z1, Z3–Z6: June 1943, pp8–9 (W R Anderson)
 Turnabout LP TV4160: April 1971, p1675 (Robert Layton)
 Philips CD 420 778-2PLC: August 1988, p294 (Alan Sanders)

Useful biographies:

- Nestev, Israel: *Prokofiev* (OUP, London 1961)
 Robinson, Harlow: *Sergei Prokofiev* (Robert Hale, London 1987)

List of movements, Decca and USSR 78 rpm record numbers

1. Montagues and Capulets: (concl)	Z1	7754/1	G-1531
2. Juliet, the little girl: (concl)	[Z2]	7764/1	G-1541
3. Friar Laurence:	Z3	7756/1	G-1539
4. Dance:		7757/3	G-1540
5. Romeo and Juliet before parting: (cont) (concl)	Z4	7761/2	G-1537
6. Dance of the Antilles girls:	Z5	7762/3	G-1538
7. Romeo at Juliet's grave: (concl)	Z6	7763/3	G-1535
		7758/1	G-1536
		7759/3	G-1533
		7760/1	G-1534

G is in the form of the Russian letter. Other 78rpm set issues were: Supraphon 40068–73; DISC 4010–15 (set 754); Compass set C101. The origin of these (see WERM) is assumed to be the USSR stampers, but I have no direct evidence for this.

LETTERS



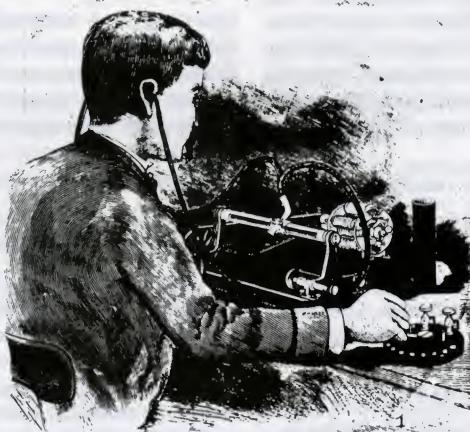
Howard Hope writes to Paul Tritton

Dear Mr Tritton,

I have just enjoyed reading your book "The Lost Voice of Queen Victoria" and greatly admire the scholarship and detective work that went into its researching. I like it all the more for your insistence, as a 'scientific' author, on limiting the conclusions that you draw to well-founded speculation.

How I wish I could have known about your project when you were working on it, as I might have been able to contribute some detail, and if anything, added fuel to your fire! Nobody who you approached would have appeared to have seen a real treadle Graphophone, far less operated one, and had they done so, some more interesting speculations could have been framed. Several answers to puzzles raised in the book are answered by looking at the machine in question. Similarly, more problem areas are brought to light!

In the Edison system, the 'Spectacle' device with which you will now be familiar, held both the recorder and the reproducer in a movable frame, ready to be brought into play. In the Graphophone, the entire trunnion assembly is duplicated with one carrying the recorder and one a reproducer. To facilitate an easy 'switch' between one the other, the trunnion assembly is not fixed and to the machine, but is held by gravity and a clip astride the guide rods and feed screw. In the engraving of Edmunds' own machine, the recording arm assembly is lying on one side waiting to be brought into play. When the machine was not in use, it would have been good practice to have stored away the removable parts, and no safe



afforded by the case design. From your researches it is seen that the valuable pieces were separated in moving. Without them the machine above the treadle base would have presented as a flat board with three rods across it and a governor behind and no more. Short sighted as the Science Museum men seemed to have been, to their eyes the entire 'business end' of the machine was missing, I think I can sympathise with their attitude.

Much more intriguing to me is why the late donor's executor chose to be 'out' when the men called. It has the ring of one of those murder mysteries where the clues fail to fit satisfactorily, (Inspector Morse, perhaps?!). Apart from anything else it would seem to have been bad manners, and I doubt that the men down from London were pleased to be received by a woman who couldn't answer for the missing parts. It all seems most ungracious. Reading between the lines, (and this matter, is most unscientific), I feel that the executor didn't particularly put himself out in this matter and that makes me feel doubly that the recorder and reproducer might have been located if some effort had been put in. However, although I am quite willing to believe the cylinder having been recorded — I do not believe from what you tell us subsequently, (and from Edmunds' own words), — that this was the machine on which it was made, and herein lies the thrust of my letter to you.

Edmunds tells us that when the Queen expressed an interest in seeing the Graphophone, Morse was despatched with an instrument, not with the instrument, telling us immediately that the former had imported more than one machine for his demonstrations. I don't believe that this was a verbal slip: it could explain a lot.

What you failed to realise is that there was an electric version of the Graphophone available in 1888, and, for that matter, a treadle Edison. Just because the machines brought together for public comparison at Bath were the machines correctly

indentified in popular engravings of the time does not mean that they were the only models available to their representatives. A treadle Graphophone would not have been capable of steady and sustained 140 rpm or anything like it. A mechanically governed machine just could not be could not be cranked up to 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ times its expected working speed; an electric machine would be another prospect. Who better than Morse, with his interest in electricity to demonstrate the machine, which, lacking a cast iron table base, would have been much easier to transport up to Scotland?

The cylinder thus made would have been replayable on the treadle machine which ended up at Morse's home, as the mandrels would have accepted the same cylinder, but the lower speed and 'reversed' track would have made for a doubly confusing rendition! I find it quite plausible that Morse romanticised about the machine in his possession — your book is sprinkled with those embroidered memories which always accompany those close to great historical happenings. Had he really a grasp on his subject, his own ears would have told him, even had he forgotten, that one of the tracks on his beloved cylinder was recorded 'backwards', and yet he appears to have played it straight through to his children without comment or apology! On purely practical considerations there is another reason for suspecting that Victoria was not recorded on a treadle machine. When treadle sewing machines were introduced in the 1860's Queen Victoria was already in her forties. Even had she been younger, I doubt she would have had more than a token 'go' on such a machine for obvious reasons.

Treading is a 'knack' to get right, and most men make a hash of their first attempt at it.

To operate a treadle Graphophone, the user sits up to the machine with his or her feet under it, the mouthpiece held to the face with the left hand while the right operates an instantaneous clutch. He or she has to tread steadily and speak naturally and remember the right hand position — not an easy task, and all the harder if you are wearing skirts and very short, which Her Majesty was, at only four feet ten inches. Although it is a speculative scene, I enclose a contemporary engraving of The Queen at Osborne House hearing the telephone in 1878. Ten years later her dress would have been just as obstructive, if not more so.

The solution would have been for Morse to have reached for the Queen, leaving her to lean forward over his shoulder to speak, his hand on the clutch. Only his left hand would have been free to indicate

tomatoes! At the risk of sounding like a misogynist, I doubt that the Queen in her sixties would have been capable, without experience, of keeping the well-regulated speed with which you credit the recording, even had the speed been achieved by some modification to the governing system not understood.

When Morse went up to Balmoral, he and Edmunds were meant to be promoting a product for an employer. Colonel Gouraud had already executed a publicity coup for Edison by exchanging cylinder greetings between America and England. Gladstone had been captured on wax by the Edison representative. Surely the coup of the phonograph world would have been a record of Victoria herself. Right up to the time he got to Balmoral, Morse was not to have guessed at the Queen's opposition to any exploitation of her recording. I rather feel that his 'prized possession' was intended to have been destined for America, and the Graphophone Company for promotional 'points'. This is purest supposition, but I feel that if there were anybody to whom 'Greetings' might have been addressed, it would more logically have been to Professor Bell, an expatriate Scot who, unlike 'Britons everywhere' at least had a machine on which to play back his message.

Surely the sheer fact that the cylinder of the Queen is messily recorded suggests that it is either a test of some kind or that another 'properly' recorded one was also made. I find it very hard to believe that a woman well known for her great sense of fun would have stalled at such a weak message and not demanded another 'go', especially as it was by Royal Command that Morse was in Scotland in the first place.

At this point I am just guessing, and that is not scientific! A real experiment might involve playing another such cardboard cylinder backwards several times using the contemporary stylus bar setup, which as you can see in the enclosed engraving 'trails' on the groove. Goodness knows what damage the track undergoes as it revolves against the intended angle of the playback arm.

If ever you are up my way, do feel free to visit my shop any Friday or Saturday. I promise not to argue about the book at all — unless you want to!

Sincere best wishes, Howard Hope.

Joe Pengelly replies

Dear Editor,

In the June 1992 issue of "Hillandale News" my friend, Peter Copeland commented on my criticisms of his realisation of the sound emanating from an 1888 Graphophone cylinder that may contain the voice of Queen Victoria. I, therefore, respond with the following:

- 1) I am astonished that Peter confirms that there is no obligation for the National Sound Archive to preserve the various carriers of sound with which it deals, such as the 1888 Graphophone cylinder. When I was privileged to work on the Menelik cylinders my only and proper consideration was that those unique cylinders be not damaged in the process of their sound realisation no matter how good the sound might have been achieved by a process of replay immolation. Had it been otherwise I might have found myself in the Tower!
- 2) I am bewildered that Peter has referred to his preference to working with a modern vinyl pressing of a rare G&T — a flat disc — when the subject under discussion is a cylinder recording, an entirely different format — flat as against round — as well as other important differences requiring different techniques of replay.
- 3) I find it curious in the extreme, too, that Peter should have had difficulties in establishing the correct stylus to fit the Graphophone grooves. A shadowgraph would at once have established a correct stylus size and configuration. I'm sure Wyndham Hodgson of the Expert Stylus Company would have willingly provided such a shadowgraph along with a stylus to match. What is surely to be deplored is the 'try and hear' philosophy employed by Peter using this Graphophone cylinder as his test bed and a stylus to 'scrape' detritus from the Graphophone grooves.
- 4) While accepting the three reasons Peter gives for not trying a Japanese non-contact and non-destructive laser replay system, he is apparently unaware of the latest and promising development elsewhere in this field. I fully accept Peter's premise that waxes deteriorate over the years and that time is a consideration, but non-playing at least does not cause ozokerite to be dislodged from the cylinder grooves as happened with last year's playing — an accelerated rate of deterioration if ever there was one. So, why the desperate rush to produce what must be, with some justification, the audio equivalent of "The Emperor's New Clothes"?
- 5) In paragraph six of his reply Peter confirms that on 11th June all the various and multiple playings of the Graphophone cylinder to establish "directions and speeds of rotation" using a large-tipped stylus were taken on to tape. Later on that same date Peter confirms that a different 1-thou stylus was used 'only once', but he ignores his previous multiple playings of the cylinder as above. My statement in my review that the Graphophone cylinder was played on "a number of occasions" therefore stands unrefuted.
- 6) Peter is in error that my comment that 'the replay machinery used by the National Sound Archive is hardly 'state of the art', lacking as it does both facilities and sophistication" refers to Lloyd Stickells' machine of 1983. It does, in fact, refer specifically not to that machine at all but to the 'bread board' system of replay used on the Graphophone cylinder as shown on TV and now my video copy of it. Both systems of replay are, though, basically the same with each lacking the ability, among others, to alter stylus pressure during playback as Peter admits and an absolute necessity for maximising the quality of replay. Those interested may like to know the Gramophone of May 1991 — pages 2100 to 2103 — has an illustrated article on a universal electrical cylinder replay machine incorporating all the features lacking in the National Sound Archive equipment.
- 7) Peter ends his reply, and I quote, that his "machine LOOKS like a lash-up". My understanding of the engineering world is that if something looks right it is right and, if it looks otherwise it isn't.
- 8) As to Peter's question as to "what else do we actually NEED?" I would have thought a replay system for a Graphophone cylinder that does not dislodge "small particles of ozokerite" from its surface.

I hope that the above can be directed ensuring that in future proper consideration, equipment and procedures will be adopted in the realisation of original source sound carriers such as the Graphophone cylinder and that they are not subjected to a pre-1990 philosophy.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Pengelly, Mannamead, Plymouth

J. H. Squire

Dear Sir,

I wonder if I might add a few words to Peter Cliffe's article on J. H. Squire and the resulting interesting letter from Mrs Joan Voysey.

From his entry in the 1937 "Who's Who in Music" it is Squire who presumably supplies the date of 1913 when his Celeste Octet was formed. The Octet must have started making records later that year or in the first month of 1914 because nine Blue Amberol cylinders were issued by Thomas Edison Ltd. in London from March to November 1914 with numbers between 23214 and 23309. Readers will recall that by this date all London matrices were sent to New Jersey for processing and the cylinders shipped back over the Atlantic.

I do not know if any other unissued cylinders were made by the Moss-Squire Celeste Octet, as it was then called, or of any other recordings on labels of that time. The Octet took its name from Sir Edward Moss who had formed the Moss Empire Theatre chain, but had died in 1912 aged 60. In the "Who's Who" entry Squire mentions several impresarios with whom he or had been connected, Frank Curzon, Gilbert Miller and André Charlot, but nothing of Moss and I can find no further reference to this on my bookshelves.

These cylinders used to be found fairly often; I have several but have not been lucky in picking up copies that play well.

Yours faithfully,

George Frow, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Appeal from The Musical Museum

Dear Chris,

We are seeking information on recordings made at "The Regal Cinema, Kingston" and I wonder if any of your readers could help with the under-noted list either as original discs or copied onto cassette, so that we can complete the Museum's archive collection:

Reginald Foort on Imperial:

- 2680 All of me; An evening in Carolina
- 2702 Now that you're gone;
When the rest of the crowd goes home
- 2763 For you, just you my baby;
You loving me
- 2875 William Tell Overture

8355 Theme songs from former films
(also as Rex 8355)

Michael Cheshire on Eclipse:

- 210 Goodnight little girl; Yearning for you
- 224 Voice in the old village choir;
All through jealousy
- SC69 Narcissus; Troika
- SC86 Sanctuary of the heart; In a Persian Market

Harold Ramsey on Parlophone:

- F577 Popular Melodies No.2
- F723 Big broadcast of 1932;
Pennies from Heaven
- F869 Rodeo march (B side only)

Joseph Seal on Parlophone 78rpm or 45rpm:

- R4131 Popular favourites GEP542
- R4395 Jerome Kern favourites 45/R4395

Yours sincerely,

Michael J. Ryder, Chairman, The Musical Museum,
High Street, Brentford

Embassy Records (1)

Dear Sir,

In the issue of "Hillendale News" No. 185 of April 1992, Bill Dean-Myatt requested details of Embassy records. Below is a list of 78s from my collection. As a collector of 78s, I hate to admit that I may have in store two 45s: "Patricia" performed by Gordon(?) Franks and his Orchestra and an EP of My Fair Lady hits. I'll look these up if Bill needs the information.

WB150 Bob Dale and The Johnny Gregory Orchestra in "The Yellow Rose of Texas" and "The Man from Laramie"

WB159 Bob Dale and The Johnny Gregory Orchestra in "Four in a chord", "White Christmas" and "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer";

WB163 Keith Warwick in "Love is a many splendoured thing" and "Suddenly there's a valley"

WB200 John Hanson and Doreen Hume in vocal Gems from "Carousel"

Please could you help me identify a record that has either lost its label or never had one other than a blank paper one. The only information on the label is

hand written in ink and in pencil.

Record Number 1074 (additionally 392 is written on one side); Matrix: A20336/A20339; Title 1: "Les Cloches" (The Bells); Title 2: "Callito" (Spanish March) Orchestra Jumbo Military. As to the construction of the disc there is a very short run-off groove at the centre which ends in a 1mm high circular ridge equidistant between the recording and the edge of the label. The edge is marked by a similar ridge about equidistant from the rim and the start of the recording.

Many thanks,

John Loader, London SE14

Embassy Records (2)

Dear Chris,

In response to Bill Dean-Myatt's letter concerning Embassy Embassy Records in April's "Hillandale News" I beg to inform him and other members that the complete Embassy listing is obtainable from Record Information Services (proprietor: Paul Pelletier), [REDACTED] Forest Hill, London SE23 1DB as No.15 in "Loose-Leaf Record Information" series. Produced in a "comb-bound" format, the Embassy listing costs £5.75 for UK; £6 for Europe or Surface mail anywhere and £7 by air.

It comprises the complete WB series 78rpm and 45rpm issues (consisting of 578 records with 4 blank entries); a variable prefixed series BT100 to HT108 (78rpm); the "Big Four" series, which have two tracks to each side (45rpm) 2001 to 2014 (except 2012 and 2013); a "Birthday series" — one 45rpm for each age from 2 years to 7 years (only one is logged); four 7" 33rpm language course records and the WEP 45rpm Extended Play series, starting as monophonic and changing to stereophonic (121 entries with 7 blank entries). The time scale is 1954 to 1965.

The lay-out consists of catalogue number; issue date; artist's credits followed by the titles. As all discs would be transfers from tape recordings the matrix stock numbers are not given and there are no recording dates, neither are the lyricists or composers given. Artists known to have recorded for other labels, and therefore better known than most Embassy artists limited to that label, or to have broadcast, are about 25 in all. They are to be found in alphabetical order in the artists list. A few pseudonyms have been detected including those for Teddy Johnson, Geoff Love, Neville Taylor and Jules Ruben.

The records were made by Oriole records who owned the Embassy trademark, but pressed them for Woolworth's Stores' exclusive use in Britain, but exporting others abroad.

Yours sincerely, Frank Andrews, Neasden, London

Sounds Vintage

Dear Editor,

With reference to the letter from Philip Burke in the April issue, it should be pointed out that no authority has been given to reproduce copies of "Sounds Vintage". In any case, back numbers are still available to those interested — from our regular stall at Wimbledon record bazaars, or by mail order from our appointed agents The Talking Machine Review. Enquiries should be addressed to TMR, 105 Sturdee Avenue, Gillingham, KENT ME7 2HG, accompanied by SAE. Copies are available at a cost of £1 each, postpaid.

Yours sincerely,

Norman Stevens, Barnehurst, Kent

Speech Records

Dear Chris,

Is there anyone who collects language courses and similar types of speech records?

I am researching Durium and Trusound records and suspect quite a few of my gaps would be filled by this type of record. Durium produced their own language courses — of which I know of 3 sets out of 6 — French for the English, English for the Danes and German for Danes. But Durium also pressed records records for the Peilman Institute and the Orthological Institute (promoters of "Basic Rnglish"). I'd appreciate details on any of these.

I suspect a Linguaphone connection with both Durium and Trusound if only because masters seem to have been sold to, and various payments received from, Linguaphone, by the Receivers of these companies. All three companies were located on the Slough Estate. Were Durium and Trusound masters issued on shellac Linguaphones or was this to continue flexible issues?

Any information would be gratefully received.

Yours sincerely, Barry Pliskin, Bournemouth

Unusual Gramophone

Dear Chris,

On April 3rd of this year I was approached by one of the lads in my local pub, who happened to hear me discussing 78s. He is a long-time radio ham, and told me he had something in his garage I might be interested in. The next day I went along to have, and what I picked up is shown in the enclosed photograph. It is a gramophone with an electrical pick-up. He told me he had got hold of it in a van-load of old radios many years previously. It was in a terrible state; the top of the lid was missing and the back of the lid had a bad case of woodworm. There were traces of a felt lining on the inside of the lid and the turntable was a sheet of rust. Two weeks later it looks like it does in the picture.

According to him, these were supplied by ENSA to the forces during the Second World War and are designed to run through a "Tannoy" system in a barracks etc. Basically it is an HMV 102 motor with an HMV/ Marconi electrical pick-up. The brass plate on the front of the machine reads:

PATTERN A 1716, GRAMOPHONE, PORTABLE;
SPRING DRIVEN, WITH ELECTRICAL. PICK-UP;
VOLUME CONTROL AND TELEPHONE JACKS;
E.M.I. SERVICE NO.227720 1943.

Since working on this machine I have tried to run it seven ways through three different amplifiers, all with no success. It seems to me that what I have is similar to the HMV Gramophone Conversion Kit of the 1930s. The volume control and telephone jacks have long ago been lost. If anyone has any idea of how I could run this machine through a modern amplifier, I would appreciate any information. I know next to nothing about electronics, and do not want to do any damage. Acoustic machines are more in my line. Also any other information about machine would be welcome. I think it is rather unusual.



Yours sincerely, K. G. O'Sullivan, Sudbury, Suffolk

Forthcoming Meetings in London

London Meetings are held at the National Sound Archive, 29 Exhibition Road, Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at 6.45pm (unless stated otherwise).

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| August 20th | "Introducing the 30" with George Woolford |
| September 17th | "Old records, new music" part 2 with Peter Adamson |
| October 15th | "Desert Island Discs Plus Four" with Geoff Edwards |
| November 19th | "We have our own records" with Frank Andrews |
| December 17th | "Entirely for Pleasure" with Tom Little |

REPORTS



London Meeting, 23rd April 1992

In their presentation "Your Very Own", George Frow and Len Watts gave us a glimpse of the Music hall and variety theatre of the 1900s to the 1930s. This was a video compilation of the television series "Turns" and "The Old Boy Network".

The opening sequence showed Charles Shadwell conducting the theatre orchestra followed by the veteran Charles Coborn performing his famous number "The Man Who Broke The Bank at Monte Carlo". George Robey, in his only appearance in costume in a sound film, was featured in "I stopped and I looked and I listened", which showed what an outstanding comedian he really was. Sam Mayo, accompanying himself in his "Soliloquy to a Pound Note", was the next item. Teddy Brown, who despite his bulk proved to be very nimble, showed what an excellent xylophonist he was.

The appearance of Sandy Powell as "The Ventriloquist" caused a great deal of laughter. This was preceded by a short piece showing Sandy at Eastbourne, looking at an antique stall selling his records at 5p each, and his remarking that inflation had not affected their price. Wilson, Keppel and Betty, together with the Garjou Brothers and Juanita were then shown performing their sand dance and acrobatics acts respectively. They were often to be seen at the Chiswick and Shepherds Bush Empires.

The programme concluded with a short sequence from the film "Say it with Flowers", in which Florrie Forde sang a medley of some of her famous songs and Marie Kendall sang her famous number "Just Like the Ivy".

George and Len obviously took a great deal of trouble preparing this programme and it is to be hoped that we will be seeing more of the same in the not too distant future.

Finally, our thanks must also go to Benet Bergonzi and the National Sound Archive for kindly loaning us the video equipment.

Geoff Edwards

London Meeting, 21st May 1992

Peter Adamson set the scene for his programme by playing two recordings, the duet from Act 2 of Tchaikovsky's 1890 "Pique Dame" performed by Gavrilseva and Pokrovskaya on a 1900 Berliner and Beethoven's "Grosse Fuge" by the Léner Quartet on a 1930 Columbia record, to illustrate the problem of defining "Old records, new music".

He then introduced us to the world of Futurism and Constructivism and showed us how art and music were essential ingredients of these vogues. By viewing many slides of pictures by artists such as Giacomo Balla, Carlo Carrà, Umberto Boccioni, Antonio Sant'Elia, Virgilio Marchi, Antoni Gaudí and Fortunato Depero we were introduced to how advanced ideas of art and architecture were reflected in contemporary musical experiments.

These showed some general trends like the further decay of late romanticism on the one hand, and a great tidying up on the other hand; tremendous fantasies and a love of movement, speed, mechanism and power; a taste for the exotic, and the exploitation of collage techniques. Peter explained that all these aspects were reflected in the contemporary music. In addition political angles complicated and distorted the trends. Peter gave us musical illustrations to back his case, all from 78s on digital tape.

First we heard an excerpt from Stokowski's 1932 recording of Schoenberg's "Gurrelieder". This was followed by Henry Cowell playing his own 1914 piano composition "Advertisement" (using his fists!) on a 1948 recording on Concert Hall records.

Peter went on to explain that Futurism spurned traditional music sounds in favour of modern noises such as street noises, mechanical noises, engines and speed noises. Further slides of pictures by Futurist artists and musical illustrations supported his arguments. We heard Luigi Russolo conducting an orchestra of "noise machines" playing his brother Antonio's "Serenata". Arthur Honegger then followed in a 1925 acoustic recording of himself conducting a performance of his "Pacific 231". We also heard the opening section of John Alden Carpenter's ballet "Skyscrapers" conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret. This section of the programme ended with Lydia Hoffman (piano) playing George Antheil's "Airplane Sonata".

The Russian experience with political revolution and Constructivism was then explained to us. A slide showing a 1934 "The Gramophone" advertisement of Russian Music was the prompt for us to listen to Yuli Meytuss' "On the Dnieper Dam"; Alexandr Mosolov's

"Steel Foundry" and the Polka from Shostakovich's "The Age of Gold" all performed by Julius Ehrlich and the Orchestre Symphonique de Paris in 1934 recordings.

Experiments in sonority were then described by Peter. Two examples of percussion music were heard: the 2nd and 3rd movements from William Russell's "Three Dance Movements" and Edgard Varèse's "Ionisation" (which included a small siren).

Following the pre-World War One Futurist composers' use of whole-tone scales or microtones, later ones like Julián Carrillo experimented with $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$ and $\frac{1}{16}$ tones. We heard Carrillo's "Preludio a Cristóbal Colón" written for soprano, octavina, flute, guitar, harp and violin, a timely but unusual tribute to Columbus!

Some composers wrote music specifically for the gramophone. Examples of this were Gabriel Pierné's ballet phonographique "Giration" and Respighi's "Pines of Rome" where he specified an actual gramophone record of a nightingale singing (La Voce del Padrone R6105; one of Carl Reich's recordings) to link the "Pines of Janiculum" to the "Pines of the Appian Way". We heard this from a recording of 1929 by the Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted Lorenzo Molajoli.

French experiments with sonorities were then discussed by Peter. We heard Darius Milhaud conducting an excerpt from his ballet of 1917 "L'homme et son désir" and Georges Auric and Francis Poulenc playing piano duets from Erik Satie's "Parade".

The influence of jazz leading to cabaret style in music was the next idea covered by Peter and contemporary recordings of this were heard in Ludwig Hoffman singing "Blues" from Ernst Krenek's "Jonny spielt auf" and Lotte Lenja singing excerpts from Kurt Weill's "Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny".

Peter ended the evening with returning to the American scene where we heard the conclusion of Hilding Rosenberg's "Journey to America"; an excerpt from Daniele Amfitheatrof's "Panorama américain"; Radiana Pazmor (soprano) and Genevieve Pitot (piano) performing Charles Ives' weird "General William Booth enters into Heaven". Rube Bloom performing his own "That Futuristic Rag" on the piano ended this interesting, instructive and entertaining evening.

Thanks very much, Peter, and we eagerly look forward to your return in September for a further instalment.

London Meeting, 18th June 1992

In the past Rick Hardy has given us some first-rate programmes, generally on a Music Hall theme.

His programme, illustrated with slides, entitled "A Chip Off the Old Block", and subtitled "Music Hall Families", came well up to standard.

George Leybourne whose daughter married Albert Chevalier had a famous song "Champagne Charlie". It was sung here by Bobbie Comber. Rick mentioned that in the film of the same name, Tommy Trinder sang this song, but with different words.

A slide showing Fred Emney and Sydney Fairbrother in their famous sketch "A Sister to Assist'er" was then shown together with their recording of that number.

A most unusual performance of "Wilkins and His Dinah" followed, in which the verses were sung in various Indian dialects, by Walter Stanley Burke, who was the grandfather of Sydney Fairbrother.

Max Wall's father Jack Lorimer, singing "Wee Mac-Gregor" was followed by Max in a rare recording of "Jewels in the Crown of England's Glory".

Shaun Glenville, who was married to Dorothy Ward, was then heard in "Where Did You Get the Name of Hennessy?" A slide showing a cigarette card of Dorothy Ward was then shown, and we heard the recording of her on this card in which she was talking about her life.

Eleanor Jones-Hudson and Eli Hudson were heard performing "The Bird That Came in the Spring".

Both George Formby Senior and Junior made recordings of "John Willie Come On" which we heard. George Junior's version was an acoustic recording on a rare 1926 Edison-Bell record.

Of particular interest was the portrait of the Lloyd family. Marie, of course, and her less well-known sister, Alice, who was very popular in America, Cockney accent and all. We heard Alice sing "Never introduce Your Bloke to a Lady Friend" and Marie Junior (Marie's daughter) sing "I'd Like to Live in Paris". We also heard Marie's second husband Alec Hurley sing "Arry, 'Arry, 'Arry" and Rick ended the evening with an extremely rare 1904 Pathé recording of Marie singing "What, What".

An excellent evening, Rick, we all look forward to your next instalment.

Geoff Edwards

**Midlands Group Meeting,
16th May 1992 at Carrs Lane Methodist
Centre, Birmingham**

In the absence of Eddie Dunn, Wal Fowler took the chair. Wal reported on two recent fairs attended by himself and other Midland Group members. The first was the initial National Communications Fair held at the Birmingham National Exhibition Centre on Sunday 3rd May. Here there was a fine array of juke boxes, vintage wirelesses and gramophones together with millions of spare parts, much literature and hundreds of records. The second event was the Northampton Phonofair, of which there is a detailed report elsewhere in this issue. We all hope these events will be repeated in 1993.

The evening's entertainment was a tape programme devised by veteran member Jerry Lee called "New

Tenors for Old". Regular members knew exactly what to expect in the way of arias and songs from such greats as Caruso, Gigli, de Stefano and McCormack, and lighter vein songs from Patrick O'Hagan, Walter Midgley and Fritz Wunderlich.

Our celebrity local member, Peter Dempsey, was also included with two songs of Peter singing solo and two with him and Jerry singing duets.

As always Jerry's fund of anecdotes were liberally interspersed between the music and another delightful evening ended too soon.

Our next meeting will be held on Saturday 18th July (same venue) when Wal Fowler will present a programme of comedy items. In addition, new member, Mark Morgan will give an illustrated talk on "The Savoy Bands of the 1920's".

Geoff Howl

PHILIP BARRAUD — A TRIBUTE by Ernie Bayly

The death occurred during May 1992 of Philip Barraud, the grandson of Mark Henry Barraud, the original 'master' of Nipper.

His sister, Miss Enid Barraud, had been the family biographer and was present at the attempt to exhume Nipper's bones on 4th August 1950. At various times after that she was called upon to write "pieces" about Nipper for various magazines, some of which I read. So when Leonard Pett's book "The Story of Nipper and the "His Master's Voice" picture" was published in 1973 I sent her a copy, but as she had recently died a reply came from her brother Philip, who assumed the mantle of "family archivist" and became thoroughly engrossed in Nipper's life, undertaking new and original research. He greatly assisted each subsequent reprinting of the book with information that could come only from the family. In 1990 he and I had a conference over lunch in Brighton to make certain that the forthcoming reprint would be the "definitive" version because we felt that no new evidence could be found. My train arrived first at Brighton and shortly afterwards a very spry gentleman with his cap at a jaunty angle came through the 'gate' belying his age of 82 (but looking not quite so young as when I had seen him previously). He was always particular that the facts concerning the Barrauds in 'The Story of Nipper' were correct. I had met him on numerous occasions since 1973.

All the family were present at the "Dog & Trumpet" public house in Great Marlborough Street in Central London in October 1985 when Philip very proudly accepted on their behalf "The Maker of the Microphone Award" presented by Oliver Berliner, acknowledging posthumously the importance of Francis Barraud's painting "His Master's Voice" in furthering the acceptance of the Gramophone worldwide and the pleasure it thus brought to countless millions.

The task of the new "archivist" of the Barraud family will be lighter so far as Nipper is concerned, due to Philip's researches. I hope that the the new archivist will be as keenly vigilant and quick to pounce upon incorrect articles about Nipper that appear in newspapers and magazines. It is deplorable that the "His Master's Voice" pictorial trademark is rarely seen these days.



REVIEWS

THE LAST OF THE EDISONS

by Paul Collenette

The Edison company started taking lateral-cut recordings along with the Diamond disc matrices in January 1928, and reached over 1200 by October 1929. Only about 150 discs are catalogued as being issued, so they are uncommon; this cassette (No.1019 from The Vintage Recording Co.) is a selection of 19 sides recorded in the summer of 1929.

They are thus of great historical interest, and demonstrate well the brilliant electrical recording process that the Edison company (chiefly Walter Miller and Theodore Edison) had developed. The system rivals Western Electric on Columbia, for you can easily hear the notes of the brass bass. The discs (thought not to have been pressed at Edison's own plant) do however have a very large groove profile, in which an ordinary 78 stylus gets lost. A thorn needle (we don't use steel on our precious discs, do we!) on a Re-entrant HMV or Orthophonic Victor is effective. This cassette is largely of dance music from bands and vocalists. The better bands include California Ramblers, Phil Spitalny and Harry Reser. We naturally have B. A. Rolfe, Edison's top (and to them, outrageously expensive) band: one of their titles is graced by vocalist Vaughn de Leath accompanied on musical saw. Likewise we have an Edison house unit, the competent Piccadilly Players directed by Mel Morris, who was also a band booker for Paul Whiteman.

Other, sub-alumni, bands on this cassette are Jack Stillman, Arthur Fields and his (eponymous) Assassimators, Green Brothers and Jack Dalton's 7 Blue Babies.

There are also interesting vocal items by the Edisongsters (which included the ubiquitous J. Donald Parker), Miss Patriciola, Billy Murray (singing about television!), Frank Luther and Mr Parker again as soloist.

The last scheduled release (i.e. highest catalogue number) is represented here — Edison 14077. (This was not the last issued matrix, however, which was recorded a few days later.) The artist is, nominally, Luigi Romanelli and his King Edward Hotel Orchestra. Romanelli was an important Toronto bandleader: although he was paid for this session, it is thought the band is really the Piccadilly Players. Going by the trumpet, oboe and cymbals (clumsy!), I'm inclined to agree.

Altogether, this is a most interesting, historic and tuneful selection of rarities which should be in the collection of all Ediphiles. My thanks are due to Joe Moore for additional information.

The cassette is priced at \$4 + \$2 U.K. postage, from Vintage Recording Co., P.O.Box 356, St.Johnsbury, Vermont 05819, U.S.A.

BILLY WILLIAMS

by Ernie Bayly

My maternal grandfather was a fan of the Music Hall and patronised in the Folkestone area which must have been visited by many of the "top flight" artists. Amongst his favourites were Dan Leno, Little Tich and Billy Williams. He was always pleased to hear Billy's records, especially "Giving a donkey a strawberry" (not included in this compilation), "Tickle me Timothy", "Willie's Woodbines", "Put a bit of powder on it father" and "I must go home tonight".

Had grandfather lived today (apart from being 122 years old) "I'm sure he would have had a CD player in order to listen to this fine collection of twenty-three Billy Williams songs. It would require a "boxed-set" to be a complete collection. As a Williams fan myself, I know all of the songs but I think "Chanticleer", about a ladies' fashion incorporating lots of feathers, and "St.Kilda", dealing with an incident at that seaside resort near Melbourne (where, incidentally, one of today's Australian members met the young lady who became his wife) are the least commonly known in this compilation. "St.Kilda" was issued in 1910, presumably to coincide with Billy's visit to perform in Australia that year. We have his first recorded song "John, John, go and put your trousers on" and a selection through to one of the last he recorded before his premature death "There's life in the old dog yet". At the end of this Billy indulges in a long spell of 'patter' finishing with "I'm just going down for a swim. Shoreham - a lovely place. I'm going down tonight. 12.5 — don't forget." This no doubt was the time of the train he would catch home after performing on the Halls in London. Several of his songs were inspired by the events of his day. "The Taximeter Car" celebrated the introduction of motor-taxis with fare meters in which he alludes to the fact that their drivers had to keep their eyes facing forward and were unable to open the flap to look down at what was

going inside as the drivers of 2-seater cabs, sitting at the rear, could. The ragtime craze had come to Britain, especially with the "Hello Ragtime" review of 1912, and Billy had humorous cynicism with "The Ragtime Wedding". "The Land where the women wear the trousers" parodies men's intolerance of the claims of women. "I've found Kelly" is a sequel to Florrie Forde's popular song.

The excellent notes accompanying this CD are written by Dr Jeff Brownrigg of Australia's National Film & Sound Archive. He examines Billy's life, beginning with evidence to establish what was his REAL name when born. His career in Britain lasted only fourteen years from 1900 during which he became immensely popular with his chorus songs, but little about his life is known. I had some correspondence with his widow Amy

Here's Billy Williams' latest success:
"The Taximeter Car"
(Record No. 12460)

SUNG FOR REPRODUCTION EXCLUSIVELY ON
GENUINE EDISON
GOLD-MOULDED RECORDS.

And it is a success too. Sung in his own well, inimitable style, "The Taximeter Car" is a topical song that is sure to be a rage with Phonograph owners everywhere. YOU know how successful and popular Billy Williams has been in Britain—now—big is the demand for them. This new song gives you an opportunity in a thousand to boost your record business at this time of the year. It will also help you in further increasing your sales of Genuine Edison Records, because your customers can obtain "The Taximeter Car," sung by Billy Williams, only on these records.

Write up your "To me and order a liberal supply of this record without delay—do it in your competitor next month on ...

National Phonograph Company Ltd.,
25, Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C.

TRADE
Thomas A Edison
MARK

who lived into her 90s; Frank van Straten and Quentin Riggs interviewed/spoke with her back in Australia. In Britain, the Williams family lived in a resplendent wooden bungalow at Shoreham Harbour on land which was separated from the mainland at high tide, as did several other artists. (Later on the area became rather "tatty" with people living in old railway carriages, etc., until the whole area was razed at the beginning of World War II.)

Valerie Abbey has written notes on Billy's Australian tour of 1910 which includes newspaper reports. It is a fact that the

grey velvet jacket he wore on this tour is preserved by a music hall fan; presumably that which Billy is pictured wearing on the front of the CD. The transfers to CD were made by Mrs Wanda Lazar. Owing to fashions permeated by certain 'cognoscenti' Billy Williams was badly served during the era of Long Play records, so I am pleased that he is now honoured during the CD era with this fine collection. I bought my copy at the Performing Arts Museum in Melbourne, but one should write to the National Film & Sound Archive, McCoy Circuit, Acton, ACT 2601, Australia. I think the price is Aus.\$25 - but postage may be extra.

Footnote:

I'm sure that you can guess that I've been on holiday in Australia, where I concentrated on recordings and collectors who were/ are members of the Society who I have known over many years. I was the guest of Philip Archer in Launceston and then Michael and Janine Kinnear in Melbourne. I also met Colin Gracie at Ballarat, Frank van Straten in Melbourne, Tony Savery in Reservoir and Mike Sutcliffe in Sydney. I was unable to meet George Albion in Hobart or Peter Burgis in Port Macquarie so had long telephone conversations with them. Royalty could not have been treated better than I and it is splendid to know that "collecting" is in a healthy state in that big country, even if, like everywhere else, there are not so many "goodies" to be found waiting for owners. There was a little time for sight-seeing! Breaking my return journey in southern California I was regally entertained in the home of long-time friends Quentin and Evelyn Riggs, both of whom are still interested in music and recordings thereof. I especially enjoyed picking fresh ripe oranges from the tree in their backyard! I hated returning to Britain during cold February.

Ernie Bayly

PLAYING PATHÉS

by Rick Hardy

Like many collectors of 78s in the U.K. I play my collection electrically using a Goldring GL 75 turntable and arm. Equipped with a Shure M44C cartridge and various sizes of stylus for the differing groove dimensions I find it highly satisfactory for most applications — the one exception being the playing of Pathé and other hill and dale discs.

Not being an engineer I was becoming increasingly frustrated by my inability to set up my equipment properly. No matter how accurately I set the arm bias or adjusted the playing weight I was having trouble keeping the Pathé ball in the groove. I have since found out what the cause of the problem is but meantime I had discovered a way around the difficulty which might be of interest to other collectors.

I like to record my collection and although it has sometimes taken two or three takes to get a good transfer from vertically cut discs, the final crunch me when I acquired some heavily cut 'Rooster' Pathés which defied all attempts at playing without the arm skating all over the surfaces. The reason for this I have been reliably informed is, that the arm supplied with the Goldring deck has far too much 'mass' to play hill and dale records successfully. Apparently hill and dales should be played with an 'uncounter-weighted' arm but as it is not now possible to obtain cartridges that can track at over five grams this is very difficult to achieve. A high mass arm with a counter-weight cannot react quickly enough to the up and down movement of vertically cut discs resulting in an effect like ski-jumping.

I remember fellow society member Robin Hayden giving a demonstration of playing

Edison Diamond Discs with home-made equipment and I hope he won't be offended when I say that although the set-up looked very primitive he got extraordinary results with it. The equipment consisted, as far as I can remember, of an old crystal pick-up glued to a thin piece of wood as an arm. Even so I suspect that the tracking weight was in excess of five grams and it worked because the old mono pick-up could support ten grams or more.

My method of overcoming the problem of 'ski-jumping' has been effected without the need to assemble special equipment. To cut down the pick-up velocity I simply play the records at half speed. Pathés are mostly recorded at 90rpm so replaying them at 45rpm is quite simple. The GL75 deck having continuously variable speeds can however play any recording at exactly half-speed. Of course one can't listen first-hand to the recording this way but due to modern technology it is possible to do it second hand so to speak.

Double cassette decks capable of high speed dubbing (x2) are now available quite at quite cheap prices. Simply by recording normally from a record played at half speed and then transferring the tape to the left hand side and replaying at high speed will do the trick. You will need a blank tape or a cleaning tape (like an Allsop) in the right hand cassette deck to do this. I have obtained excellent transfers by this method which to my ears are superior to those played at normal speed. Quite probably this is because the slower speed allows a closer contact with the groove. This would almost certainly be so with my equipment - perhaps not with a low mass arm.

I suspect the aforesaid information is rudimentary to any half-competent engineer but I am aware through personal contact that there are others beside myself who have had, and are still having, trouble playing their Pathés. I sincerely hope that the above information is helpful.



THE CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH AND GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

at 2.30pm on Saturday 26th September 1992

at the

BLOOMSBURY CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH
235, Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EL

afterwards

"A Taste of Scotland" (a look at the Scottish Music Hall Scene)
by Chris Hamilton

Nominations for officers and committee members should reach the Society's Secretary by
1st September 1992

Items for discussion should also be forwarded to the Secretary at the following address:
Miss Suzanne Lewis, [REDACTED] Chesham, Bucks. HP5 3JB

NEW WOOD FROM 'OLD TIMBER'

by Jonathan Dobson

Towards the end of my five year apprenticeship as a pianist at the Royal Academy of Music, I was summoned to the office of my course tutor for a 'chat'. Students approach such 'chats' with trepidation; had I failed to give a satisfactory performance at my last lunchtime concert? Was I late with an essay? Had someone complained about my behaviour in the bar the previous evening? Worse. It had been decided that it was time I did something to earn my keep, and he suggested that I might give a few hours work to the hard-pressed (and much under-funded) RAM library. I accepted the offer, weighing up the black mark for saying 'no', against the inevitably boring task of cataloguing, stamping music and delivering rude letters to 'return to library' date. I chose the latter. A meeting with the librarian followed. I remember the look of horror when she realised she was expected to accept an untrained and possibly indolent student into the hallowed confines of her library. The question was asked, 'what had I to offer the library?' I answered that as an avid collector of old recordings, I could catalogue any the Academy might have. I reasoned selfishly that if cataloguing it had to be, then it might as well be something I was interested in. She surprised me by taking up my offer, probably thinking I could do less damage away from actual books. Yes, the Academy did have some old records and I was welcome to have a look. 'Having a look' is an offer no collector can resist; was it to be the complete Layton and Johnston discography (a kind bequest from some well

meaning ex-student long expired) or something more interesting? I was given the key, and led down to a cupboard in the basement.

On removing a few discs, I realised that here was something very significant. No standard rubbish, but white labelled Decca test pressings, all in their crumbling wax paper sleeves, all of Sir Henry J. Wood and the Queen's Hall Orchestra. It transpired that they had been left to the Academy on Wood's death, and had remained there ever since. The first things I came across were three single-sided tests of the same piece - Grainger's Mock Morris. That meant, of course, two unpublished takes and the eventually issued matrix. Hardly able to conceal my excitement, I rushed upstairs with the three discs clutched in my hands like religious relics, and placed them on the librarian's desk. Then I tried, incoherently, to explain the vagaries of recording procedure circa 1935, a difficult task when excited. Armed with the three tests and the eventually located commercial pressing (K 767) I was able to show her that the 'take' numbers on two of the three discs did not correspond with that on the issued record. (Decca use the same matrix number for each side recorded, but place the 'take' number at the end: e.g. TA1799/1, TA 1799/2 etc.)

What emerged over the next weeks were the session takes for most of Wood's output for the Decca Company 1935-41, many with his famous blue-pencilled remarks on the

labels. Together with the tests was a complete set of commercial pressings, clarifying which take was used and which discarded. From the rejected material it would be possible to re-assemble unpublished performances of Beethoven's Symphony No.5 (see fig.1); Brahms' Haydn Variations; Grainger's Handel in the Strand and Mock Morris (three ok'd performances of that); the Ride of the Valkyries; Rachmaninov/Wood Prelude in C# minor; The Bach/Wood Toccata and Fugue in D minor; the Praeludium by Järnefelt; Dvorak's Humoresque; the Enigma Variations and one ok'd but never issued disc of 'Dorabella' from Enigma, recorded at an earlier session, (possibly as a fill-up) but made obsolete by the later complete recording; Handel's Samson and Berenice Overtures; the London Suite by Eric Coates; Vaughan-Williams' London Symphony (all but side 2);

the Overture to 'The Wasps', and two of the three sides comprising the Fantasia on Greensleeves; the Schubert/Liszt Wanderer Fantasy with Clifford Curzon, making his concerto debut on record. Finally a complete performance of Sibelius' Valse Triste. Apropos the 'Enigma', the Decca engineers produced an edited recording, dubbing variations from different takes. This is evident from the use of two or more take numbers on the finished matrixes, and aural comparisons between the existing tests and the commercial issues. These have an unmistakably second-hand quality compared to the freshness and life of the test pressings they were dubbed from.

Perhaps the most significant find among the Decca tests was matrix EXP156, originally a microphone placement test. The sleeve was inscribed 'To Sir Henry Wood. This press-

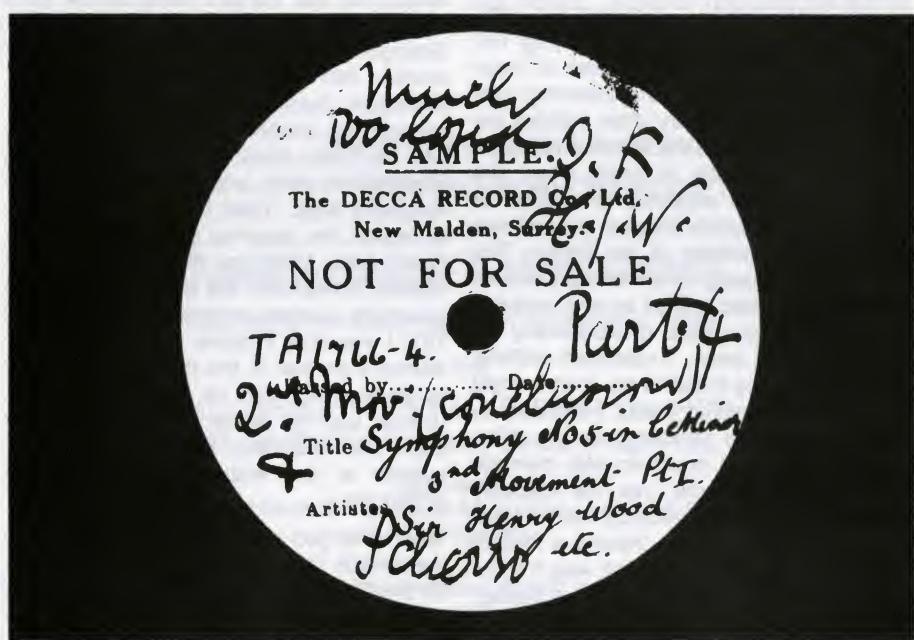


Fig. 1

ing is sent to you with the compliments of Norman Angus? and myself (Perhaps readers could enlighten me) as a memento of 3 happy days of recording, March 31, April 1st and 2nd 1936. — Walter Yeomans."

(See fig. 2). It contained 4 minutes of Wood in rehearsal, topping and tailing numbers 6, 7 and 8 of Dvorak's Symphonic variations with yells to the orchestra — before they committed his interpretation to wax. As far as I can ascertain, it is the only recorded evidence of how this great conductor worked with the orchestra.

As I have already mentioned, most of this material was rejected by Wood, but not often for purely

musical reasons. Unusually it was because of a noisy surface, bad microphone placement or over-recording, a common fault with Decca records of this period. Sometimes he actually writes on the label 'musical error' or 'poor ensemble' or 'OK, but basses don't get through'. Occasionally one hears studio noises like someone dropping their music, or a stand being moved which would, of course, have meant scrapping the take — important in the days when they were commercial products. But sixty years later they have become valuable historical documents, and we must excuse the odd flaw and rejoice in their survival. Even with slips, most of these 'rejects' are much better than some live recordings I have heard by other eminent conductors, and they do no disservice to the memory of Sir Henry Wood. In some cases, Decca even issued a

rejected matrix, presumably by mistake, so it makes a nonsense of the cries of those who shout 'leave alone'. Here is not the place to argue whether it is right to issue rejected material, but it is, surely, obvious that any disc by a great artist which is unknown to the public, and adds to our knowledge and enjoyment of that artist, should become public property.

The task I faced was forbidding: resleeving, cleaning and preserving, compiling a catalogue and storing in numerical matrix order, and then identifying what was published and what was not. My 'few hours work' had rapidly developed

into a full time research project, greatly to the detriment of my much needed piano practice before approaching exams. Balancing this was difficult, especially with the inevitable amount of teaching every musician must do to survive. Somehow I managed, inspired by the find and fully aware of the privilege that was mine to be working with such material. As I was working record by record, resisting the temptation to look on ahead, each day brought forth new treasures. I felt like an archaeologist slowly unearthing a dig, which in a way I was.

Some weeks into the work, I came across a much older record than the Deccas I had been working with. This disc was a 10" Gramophone Concert Record, not of Henry Wood the conductor, but the pianist, as accompanist to his first wife the Princess Olga Urussov in the 'Forever Forests' aria

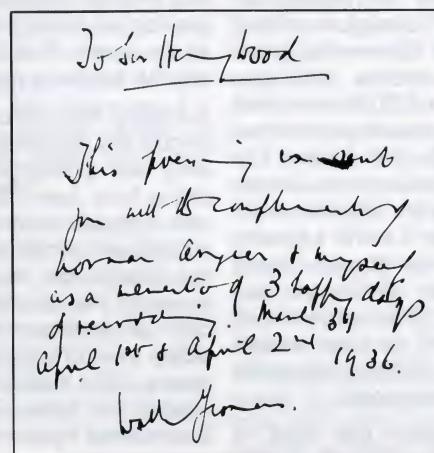


Fig. 2

from Tchaikovsky's opera 'The Maid of Orleans'. Of this record, (matrix 8803e catalogue number GC 3778), I eventually found FOUR mint copies (see fig. 3). Next came THREE mint copies of Allitsen's 'Since We Parted' and 'At Parting' by Rogers (matrix 10218e catalogue number GC 3833) one copy of Somervell's 'Sleep Baby Sleep' (matrix 10220e catalogue number GC 3833); and FOUR more mint copies of matrix 10221e catalogue number GC 3835, two songs by Eric Coates 'Orpheus and His Lute' and 'Under the Greenwood Tree'. Also among the collection were two 12" Dog Monarchs of 'Love is a Dream' (Pitt) and 'Star and Rose' (Capel) (matrix 3105f catalogue number 03161; and two more songs by Coates 'Who is Sylvia' and 'There was a Lover and his Lass' (matrix 3106f catalogue number 03162), two copies each, one unfortunately damaged.

Vocal collectors will know that what is

printed above, is the complete issued recordings by the Gramophone Company of Mr and Mrs Henry Wood, and they will also know that these are some of the rarest vocal records of all. So rare are they, in fact, that few collectors possess copies, and possibly no library other than the RAM has all six copies. Ruth Edge told me that even the EMI archive is missing one.

Incredibly there also came to light EIGHT unique and unpublished Gramophone Company test pressings of Mrs H. J. Wood dating from June 1908 to June 1909. Olga was a popular singer, much in demand for oratorio and recital work, whose career did not depend on her famous husband for success. Her records show her to have been an intelligent musician who had an ability to sing with a rich, warm, 'human' quality. This quality is admirably demonstrated on these Edwardian discs. The unpublished items include two versions in



Fig.3

English of Mendelssohn's 'On Wings of Song' (matrices 9533e and 9534e), and one sung in the original German (matrix 8802e); two versions of Capel's 'Star and Rose' (matrices 9536e and 9537e), and a beautifully sung aria from Debussy's opera 'L'Enfant Prodigue' (matrix 2529f) dating from her first session of 1908. Finally matrices 2796f, 'At Parting' (Rogers) (spelt on the label as 'On Parting'), plus 'Love me if I Live' and matrix 2797f, another version of Somervell's 'Sleep Baby Sleep' and Handel's 'Praise Thou the Lord'.

The recording engineer on all the discs was Will Gaisberg, and, as with her husband's rejected records, many were dismissed because of distant recording and noisy surfaces. She has written on some 'Ok' good' 'bad' and 'REPEAT' (on matrix 9534e). Incidentally, the 1908 session was experimental, her contract with the Gramophone Company not being signed until February 1909. The Tchaikovsky aria was therefore issued before she became an 'HMV' artiste.

I can only offer one explanation for the rarity of these discs. When they were made, Olga was already gravely ill with the cancer that was to take her life in December 1909, and it has been suggested that it was too painful for her husband to see his dead wife's records on sale. Whatever the reason they were withdrawn shortly after her death, which would have given them a catalogue life of six or seven months at most.

If any of you are left breathless with the desire to hear such recorded incunabula, try convincing record companies of the commercial viability of issuing such material!! They seem interested only in selling another billion copies of the latest 'Nige' or the latest Ravioli 'Nessun Dorma'.

One record intrigued me. Many of you will know that Wood's activities were tripartite, conductor, accompanist and vocal coach. Olga had been his pupil. This record did not

have the usual Gramophone Co. white test label, but one of duck-egg blue. It had no title, only 'Mrs Henry Wood', and in another portion of the label 'terrible' scribbled in pencil in a different hand, plus a date rubber stamped, '3/7/09'. It bore the matrix number 3107f (see fig. 4). This number ran in order with Olga's two 12" Monarch matrixes 3105f and 3106f. At this stage there was no facility in the Academy library for playing any of these recordings, and my equipment was at home in Derbyshire. I had to wait for the arrival of a Garrard 401 before I could find out what was recorded within its grooves. When I eventually played it, I heard not a soprano voice, but a tremulous male voice, HIS VOICE!! (This was later confirmed for me by his daughter Mrs Tania Cardew.) It must have been done for fun. He gives deliciously over-the-top performances of Schumann's 'The Lotus Flower' from the song cycle 'Myrthen', and 'To Anthea' by Hatton, presumably also accompanying himself, because according to the EMI archive, no other accompanist was present at the session. He finishes 'To Anthea' with great gusto, and the distinct applause of three people is heard in the locked grooves that end the record. I can only imagine that he was persuaded to sing by either Olga, or Will Gaisberg. Late on, according to his daughter, he could never be coaxed to sing on any account, and after listening to this record several times, one reaches the inescapable conclusion that he chose the right career when he became a conductor. The EMI archive lists this record as Mrs Wood singing 'To Anthea', but this might have been a ruse by Gaisberg to absolve himself of the charge of 'fooling about in the studio on company time', so maybe he purposely entered the record wrongly in the ledgers. The very survival of the record has given us a much more pungent glimpse of his personality than any orchestral recording ever could. I played this disc, along with others from the collec-

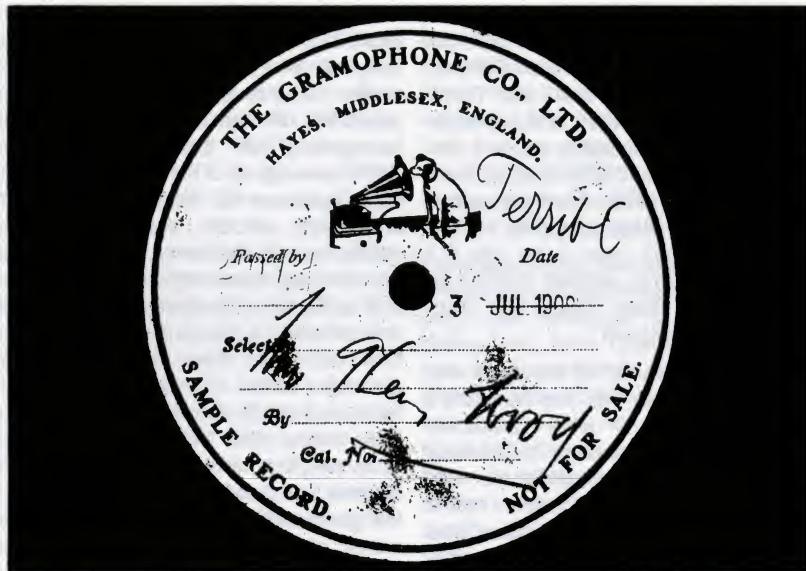


Fig. 4

tion at the inauguration of the Academy's new 'Henry Wood' Room, and it elicited exactly the same spontaneous applause from the very distinguished audience as it had done in that little recording studio on the City Road almost 90 years ago.

What of the future for this unique collection? With the centenary of the Henry Wood Proms fast approaching, and the impending publication of Arthur Jacob's biography of Wood, interest in his work will inevitably increase. The records and copyrights are owned by the Academy to whom Wood left his collection. All of the unpublished Decca tests exist in one copy only; Decca themselves do not even have the metalwork of the published matrixes, let alone the unpublished ones. As for EMI, nothing survives but the ledgers. So far the big recording companies have shown very little interest, despite the current vogue for and availability

of historical material on CD. With good marketing and promotion, they would have more than enough sales to cover the cost of re-mastering and re-issue, and still make profit. The Academy knew of the records all along. I merely recognised it for what it is, a unique archive of priceless recordings which sheds new light on the varied work of this charismatic and tireless promoter of good music, to whom we all owe so much.

{The photographs used in this article are by courtesy of Rita Castle, Photographer, the Royal Academy of Music.}



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